



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



Increasing the Fervour to Learn amongst Pre-Schoolers via Children's Theatre

Sumathi Maniam Raj, Raja Morgan Veerappan

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i10/10398> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i10/10398

Received: 11 August 2021, **Revised:** 06 September 2021, **Accepted:** 29 September 2021

Published Online: 08 October 2021

In-Text Citation: (Raj & Veerappan, 2021)

To Cite this Article: Raj, S. M., & Veerappan, R. M. (2021). Increasing the Fervour to Learn amongst Pre-Schoolers via Children's Theatre. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(10), 638–648.

Copyright: © 2021 The Author(s)

Published by Human Resource Management Academic Research Society (www.hrmars.com)

This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen at: <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/legalcode>

Vol. 11, No. 10, 2021, Pg. 638 – 643

<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/IJARBSS>

JOURNAL HOMEPAGE

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/publication-ethics>



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



www.hrmars.com

ISSN: 2222-6990

Increasing the Fervour to Learn amongst Pre-Schoolers via Children's Theatre

Sumathi Maniam Raj

Department of Performing Arts, Faculty of Music and Performing Arts, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

Raja Morgan Veerappan

Institut Pendidikan Guru Kampus Bahasa Antarabangsa, Malaysia

Abstract

Children's Theatre or Theatre For Young Audience can involve children in actual productions, plays and musicals aimed explicitly for children, or a mixture of both. The study aims to look at the combination of children's theatre and creative movement that results in boosting pre-school children's self-confidence and its ability to aid in their holistic development. The study was conducted in a nursery to expose theatre as a medium to express feelings, emotions and behaviors amongst children. Theatre as a medium of learning is also expected to be a place for children to showcase existing talent and help the child to boost their self-confidence. This study focused on a qualitative methodology applying Bloom's Taxonomy of the cognitive domain approach that involves knowledge, understanding and application. The study was conducted on seven children in *Taska Sayang Sentosa* di Bukit Beruntung, Selangor based on the Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan (Malaysian National Standard Pre-School Curriculum) 2017 under the subtopic K.E 2.1.1 *Melakonkan watak menggunakan imiginasi* (acting out characters based on imagination). The respondents were randomly selected amongst the seven children after obtaining permission from the parents and activities were planned and conducted jointly by the researchers and the teachers. The research shows that the implementation of children's theater can induce fun in learning as well as shape the personality of the child.

Introduction

There has been claim that children learn through play, and many scholars, have contributed to this expansively (Dockett, 1999; Evans, 2000; Hamilton and McFarlane, 2005; Roussou, 2004). These scholars conclude that children learn more through fun activities. It is common knowledge that children normally like to move and through movement, a child is able to emote, which in turn gives them the opportunity for psychomotor development. Children should be presented with various opportunities for movement. According to Andress (1991) children learn through movement. Thus creative movement that combines physical movement and creativity in an active and fun way is used to achieve the goals and desires of Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan (National Standard Pre-School Curriculum) 2017

and should be emphasised in the teaching and learning of pre-school children in order to enable them to benefit from the activities of creative movement that helps in the development of children in a holistic manner, (Mohammed and Luen, 2017) Generally, children are known to have a high enthusiasm for physical fitness that helps them in their efforts to learn. They have a sense of rhythm such as in natural rhythmic movements and creative abilities especially when they are not restrained, they imagine and engage in pretend play. It's not pretend that stimulates their imagination to create movement but it is a feeling, moving, becoming and belonging (Dimondstein, 1983: 44; 1971: 6). They are not only original but clever and creative in their thinking and actions. Clearly, creativity is a feature that exists in the practical life of all children. According to the authors of creative movement amongst children, it is composed of four basic elements of the human, body, space, time and connection (Laban, 1975). These elements emphasise the development of gross motor movement amongst children, creativity of behavior and thinking to cultivate a healthy child. Activities such as creative movement, dance, and music are part of the creative learning process of a child (Rebecca, 2011).

Therefore, learning creative movement is already part of the learning platform for children because it helps them to grow holistically as it is consistent with the well-being of preschoolers. Creative movement is an element that is often sidelined by the preschool teacher who only emphasises on the readiness of children's cognitive achievement. Many teachers still stay in the zone of traditional classroom teaching. They are apprehensive in using theater as teaching technique in the classroom as they assume that any "play" may predispose them to step out of their traditional teaching.

According to Idayu Binti Abdul Said, Mohd Nazri Abdul Rahman and Mariani Md Nor, 2017 in the early education of children, the integration of the arts in teaching and learning activities including lectures on art, teaching the arts, and learning through the arts can help with the development of cognitive, language and emotion of the child. In addition, it also helps children to be creative, and allows them to explore without limits or restrictions at an early age. Thus, the use of artistic activities can develop children's creativity (Brown, Benedetti, & Armistead, 2010). Therefore, before starting any kind of work of art, children should be given the opportunity to express feelings, ideas based on their experiences. Teachers need to help by enabling learning to take place in a natural environment. Every educational institution must have the goal of giving children the opportunity to grow, and to provide them characteristics that can affect their environment. Therefore, education programs that do not implement the relevant elements of art (Bae, 2009) cannot achieve this goal.

Objectives

- i. Children's theater as a means to boost self-confidence amongst pre-schoolers
- iii. Creative movement through theatre to foster the development of a child's imagination in a holistic manner, intellectually, emotionally and physically.

Methodology

This study focused on a qualitative methodology applying Bloom's Taxonomy of the cognitive domain approach that involves knowledge, understanding and application. The study was conducted through observations and case studies. The researchers have taken previous studies into consideration to obtain information on the importance of theatre on creative movement. The study was conducted on seven children in *Taska Sayang Sentosa* di Bukit

Beruntung, Selangor based on the Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan (National Standard Pre- School Curriculum) 2017 under the subtopic K.E 2.1.1 *Melakarkan watak menggunakan imiginasi* (Acting out characters based on imagination).

Interviews

Prior to the research, the researchers identified children with keen interest in theater through teaching -learning sessions using the techniques of drama, song and dance. The children were enthusiastic and very active during activities based on theatre. The researchers had impromptu conversations with the children's parents to gauge their interest in theatre-based activities. Below is the excerpt of the interview (the interview was conducted in the Malay language).

Open-ended questions in informal interview sessions

This interview was conducted with two of the respondents' parents

Respondent 1

Question : Does your child immediately engage in movements while watching videos or listening to music?

Response : Yes, he copies movements when he watches videos on Youtube.

Respondent 2

Question : Does your child immediately engage in movements while watching videos or listening to music?

Response : Yes, he really enjoys watching videos that involves movements and he loves creating new moves. He also loves imitating cartoon characters.

Observations

Observations were carried out during the learning session. Prior to conducting the study, the researcher observed the teaching and learning sessions conducted by the teachers who made use of conservative teaching techniques and the children were unresponsive to the questions asked by the teacher. In fact, some children were easily distracted and were 'in their own world'. The researcher then began the lesson with a song by the cartoon character *Didi and Friends*. The observation of two of the respondents is as recorded below. Then the lesson was followed by a story telling session (based on the researchers' creativity). The children were then given characters based on the story they have just heard. They were given the liberty to act out the characters based on their imagination. They were encouraged to move and play about while remaining in their characters. The researchers observed that the children were able to produce a variety of creative movements, depicting their feelings throughout the activity. In children's theatre, plots with simple structures can be effective and easy to follow. The character that is undertaken by the child establishes a relationship with he/she and in turn allows them to follow its actions,

Respondents	Didi and Friends Song	Impersonating animal sounds and movements
1	Can dance according to the movements in the video	Able to mimic sounds and movements
2	Able to create own movements	Able to creatively produce sounds and movements.

Checklist

The checklist is designed to measure the progress made by the respondent. In the checklist, the researchers only indicate the progress shown by respondents participating in theater activities.

Checklist

Respondent	Didi and Friends Song	Impersonating animal sounds and movements
1	Interested	Very interested
2	Very interested	Very interested

Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusions

i. Theater can help children improve self-confidence.

In the initial stage of the lesson, the children were conspicuously less cooperative as teaching and learning were done by completing worksheet in a traditional way. The use of children's theatre which made use of dancing and acting, ignited positive response. The children showed interest in the learning sessions. The children who were shy and withdrawn began to show an interest to correspond with their peers. Creative children were able to showcase interesting dance moves and characterisation and in turn support their peers. Children learned about social and ethical issues and developed social skills through the medium of theatre.

ii. Theater provides an opportunity for every child to reach out to new knowledge through imaginative dimension of activities and experiences.

During the learning, the children were given opportunities to explore and move about freely according to their creativity. This in turn enables the children to gain new knowledge through imagination and meaningful experience while learning.

iii. Theater activities foster the development of a child's imagination in a holistic manner, intellectually, emotionally and physically.

Theater has the ability to nurture creativity, invention, insight and discovery of children. Children can develop their imagination through dancing and acting activities as they are able to utilise their skills through movements that enfolds intellectual, emotional and physical aspects. The children expressed their emotions through the movements they produced. Indirectly children can secrete a variety of creative movements their imagination. Zakkai (1997) states that children who are involved in movements not only enhance their kinesthetic ability but their cognitive ability as well as they are able to grasp the concept and theme better which in turn improves the thinking skill. In addition, movement activities also

represent unique communication skills, be able to develop spatial intelligence and indirectly establish a healthy environment with each other through cooperation. The findings of this study show that creative movement is not only focused on physical movement alone but is able to make a positive impact on the development of cognitive and affective skills as well. This is consistent with increasingly challenges that requires one to be strong internally and externally. (Mohammed & Luen, 2017).

Conclusion

On the whole, throughout the study the researchers are find that children's theater enables the children to enhance their self-confidence. It allows the children to take risks in class and perform for an audience. It teaches the children to trust their ideas and promotes cooperation and collaboration with their peers. The researchers of the study expect the education system to give greater weightage to children's theater because it can help children improve their self-confidence through acting and performing movement activities. Children can also produce a variety of creative movement created through imagination that showcase their feelings and emotions. Children's theater also helps teachers to be sensitive towards the children's needs and enables them to lure the children away from being obsessed with technology. Theatre combines the creative ideas and abilities from its participants to be aware of their society and advocates social awareness and aesthetic appreciation. This study provides a positive impact on children in terms of improved academic excellence and transformed behavior in children

References

- Andress, M. (1991). *From research to practice: Preschool children and their movement responses to music*. *Young Children*, 47, 22-27.
- Bae, B. (2009). *Children's Right to Participate –challenges in everyday interactions*, *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 3.
- Brown, E. D., Benedett, B., & Armistead, M. E. (2010). *Arts Enrichment and School Readiness for Children at Risk*. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25.
- Dimondstein. (1983). *Moving in The Real and Feeling Worlds a Rationale for Dance in Education*. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*.
- Kocer.(2012). The evaluation of the art activities applied in preschool education programmes in terms of self-expression opportunity given to child
- Laban, R. (1975). *The Mastery of Movement*. Boston: Plays, Inc.
- Muhamad, J., & Luen, L. C. (2017). Pembangunan dan Kesahan Modul Pergerakan Kreatif dalam Elemen Drama (Petif-Ma) bagi Kanak-Kanak Prasekolah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak Kebangsaan 2017 Special Issue*, 67-78.
- Abdul Said, I. B., Abdul Rahman, M. N., & Nor, M. M. (2017). Analisis Kandungan Terhadap Aktiviti Seni bagi Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak dalam Jurnal Terpilih dari 2010-2016. *Jurnal Kurikulum & Pengajaran Asia Pasifik Bil. 5, Isu 1*, 55-63.